

Applic. No. 10/799,098
Amdt. dated March 28, 2008
Reply to Office action of December 28, 2007

Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1, 3-8, 12, 13, and 15-17 are now in the application. Claims 1, 6, and 16 have been amended. Claims 2, 9, and 14 are being cancelled herewith. Claims 10 and 11 were previously cancelled. Claim 17 has been added. Support for claim 17 can be found in Figs. 1-4. No new matter has been added.

In item 2 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 3-5, 8, and 12-15 have been rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

The Examiner stated that in claims 8 and 14 it is unclear if "a sheet transport direction" is the same as in claim 6. The claims have been amended so as to clarify that the sheet transport direction is one and the same. Therefore, the rejection has been overcome.

The Examiner stated that there is insufficient antecedent basis for "said nozzle" in claim 12. The claims have been

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amended so as to further clarify the claim. Therefore, the rejection has been overcome.

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for cosmetic or clarificatory reasons. The changes are not provided for overcoming the prior art nor for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

In item 3 on page 3 of the Office action, claims 1-9 and 12-16 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Seybold (U.S. Patent No. 2,214,088) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and as a whole, the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references. However, in order to facilitate prosecution of the application, claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 2 claim 6 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 9 and 14.

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Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, *inter alia*:

reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the overlapping stream by lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet, and lifting the sheet trailing edge of the first sheet by blowing under the sheet from behind the sheet.

Claims 6 and 16 call for, *inter alia*:

the lifting device including at least one nozzle with an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream, and the lifting device having a free jet nozzle in addition to the nozzle, the free jet nozzle being aimed at the overlapping sheet stream obliquely from above in the sheet transport direction.

The Seybold reference discloses a device for separating sheets from a sheet pile (P) and forwarding the separated sheets in proper alignment to a machine that is to be fed with the

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sheets in a sheet stream of single sheets or in an overlapping sheet stream. To this end, Seybold discloses that a rear edge blower (195 and 196) is used to blow below the rear edge of the uppermost sheet in the sheet pile (P). Seybold discloses a suction gripper (20) that is used to lift the uppermost sheet of the sheet pile (P).

Seybold does not disclose a method or device for lifting the rear edge of a sheet in an overlapping sheet stream.

The reference does not show reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the overlapping stream by lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet, and lifting the sheet trailing edge of the first sheet by blowing under the sheet from behind the sheet, as recited in claim 1 of the instant application. The Seybold reference discloses blowing air under a topmost sheet of a sheet pile. Seybold does not disclose blowing air at a sheet in an overlapping sheet stream. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, which recites reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the overlapping stream by lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport

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direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet, and lifting the sheet trailing edge of the first sheet by blowing under the sheet from behind the sheet.

Since claim 1 is allowable over Seybold, dependent claims 3-5 are allowable over Seybold as well.

The following further remarks pertain to claims 6 and 16.

The reference does not show the lifting device including at least one nozzle with an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream, and the lifting device having a free jet nozzle in addition to the nozzle, the free jet nozzle being aimed at the overlapping sheet stream obliquely from above in the sheet transport direction, as recited in claims 6 and 16 of the instant application. The Seybold reference discloses blowing air under a topmost sheet of a sheet pile with a blower (195 and 196). Seybold disclose a suction gripper (20) for lifting the topmost sheet of a sheet pile. Seybold does not disclose a nozzle and a free jet nozzle in addition to the nozzle. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, which recites the lifting device including at least one nozzle with an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over

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the first sheet of the overlapping stream, and the lifting device having a free jet nozzle in addition to the nozzle, the free jet nozzle being aimed at the overlapping sheet stream obliquely from above in the sheet transport direction.

Since claim 6 is allowable over Seybold, dependent claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, and 17 are allowable over Seybold as well.

In item 4 on page 6 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-3, 6-9, and 12-16 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Heine et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,522,388) (hereinafter "Heine") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

In item 5 on page 10 of the Office action, claim 16 has been rejected as being fully anticipated by Heine (U.S. Patent No. 4,522,388) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

The Heine reference discloses that an auxiliary blower (80) is located above the sheet path. The auxiliary blower is adjustable in the sheet path transport direction and it is pivotable about an axis. Therefore, Heine discloses the possibility to adjust the auxiliary blower. Heine discloses that the blower (80) may be a plurality of closely spaced nozzles extending the width of the sheet, or the blower may be a continuous slit extending across the width of the sheet.

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Heine discloses that the blower (80), as a whole may be adjusted.

The present invention as claimed has two nozzles, where one is set to blow in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream, and the other is aimed at the overlapping sheet stream obliquely from above in the sheet transport direction. The Heine reference can only meet the requirement of only one of the two nozzles at a time.

The reference does not show reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the overlapping stream by lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet, and lifting the sheet trailing edge of the first sheet by blowing under the sheet from behind the sheet, as recited in claim 1 of the instant application. The Heine reference discloses an adjustable auxiliary blower. Heine does not disclose that the auxiliary blower can be simultaneously adjusted to blow tangentially over a sheet and under the sheet to lift the sheet from behind. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, which recites reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the

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overlapping stream by lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet, and lifting the sheet trailing edge of the first sheet by blowing under the sheet from behind the sheet.

Since claim 1 is allowable over Heine, dependent claims 3-5 are allowable over Heine as well.

The following further remarks pertain to claims 6 and 16.

The reference does not show the lifting device including at least one nozzle with an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream, and the lifting device having a free jet nozzle in addition to the nozzle, the free jet nozzle being aimed at the overlapping sheet stream obliquely from above in the sheet transport direction, as recited in claims 6 and 16 of the instant application. The Heine reference discloses an adjustable auxiliary blower. Heine does not disclose a nozzle with an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream and a free jet nozzle in addition to the nozzle, the free jet nozzle being aimed at the overlapping sheet stream obliquely from above in the sheet transport

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direction. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, which recites the lifting device including at least one nozzle with an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream, and the lifting device having a free jet nozzle in addition to the nozzle, the free jet nozzle being aimed at the overlapping sheet stream obliquely from above in the sheet transport direction.

Since claim 6 is allowable over Heine, dependent claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, and 17 are allowable over Heine as well.

In item 6 on page 11 of the Office action, claim 4 has been rejected as being obvious over Heine (U.S. Patent No. 4,522,388) and further in view of Jeschke (U.S. Patent No. 4,886,261) under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Jeschke does not make up for the deficiencies of Heine. Since claim 1 is allowable, dependent claim 4 is allowable as well.

In item 7 on page 12 of the Office action, claim 5 has been rejected as being obvious over Heine (U.S. Patent No. 4,522,388) and further in view of Schwebel (U.S. Patent No. 3,624,807) under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Schwebel does not make up for the deficiencies of Heine. Since claim 1 is allowable, dependent claim 5 is allowable as well.

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It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1, 6, or 16. Claims 1, 6, and 16 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 6, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-16 are solicited.

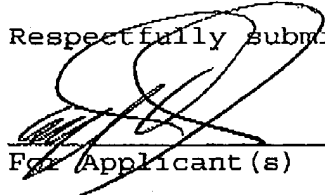
In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

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Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner
Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



For Applicant(s)

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